

## PARISH DIRECTORY

### Pastoral Council

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### Finance Council

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### Parish Education Committee

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### Parish Fundraising Committee

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### COORDINATORS

#### Altar Guild

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#### Altar Servers

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#### Children's Liturgy

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#### Craft Group

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#### Development & Peace

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#### Eucharistic Ministry

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#### Communion to the Sick

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#### PREP

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#### Project Advance

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#### Weddings

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December 24, 2023  
4th Sunday of Advent

## Welcoming Jesus as Mary Did

By Fr Paul Grankaukas

Scripture says, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings tidings of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns'" (Is 52:7). Rightly do these words apply to the angel Gabriel, who brings to us from God the gladdest tidings of all.

Consider the Annunciation from Mary's point of view. The words of the angel echo the promise made by the Lord to King David centuries before: "Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me; your throne shall stand firm forever." Mary's heart must have raced to hear the angel's news. Her Son would be the royal offspring of David and He would establish a lasting kingdom. Her Son would be the long-awaited Messiah. The angel's tidings meant that God had not forsaken His people. Rather, God was going to visit them anew. This was the fulfillment of the deepest longings of Mary's people.

Consider this from our point of view. When the angel calls Mary's child the "Son of the Most High," it goes beyond what even the Jewish people might have expected of the Messiah. He would not simply be God's son in a moral sense or by adoption. Rather, we know that Jesus is "light from light, true God from true God, one in being with the Father." The divine Son, born of the Virgin Mary, would receive what He did not possess on His own: a human nature, flesh and blood, a body and soul. This is the flesh and blood He would offer in sacrifice on the cross to save His fellow men from sin, taking His place as the new Adam who renews and restores creation. From our point of view, the angel's tidings mean that the moment of our redemption is at hand.

There is yet a deeper lesson we can draw from contemplating this moment in salvation history. It is not enough that Mary should conceive the child in her womb. She has to welcome the child in her life. We might ask ourselves, what's the difference? The answer is simple. Mary could conceive the child in her womb, but she had to welcome her Son as her Savior. She would walk the road to Calvary with her Son and would play an intimate part in the work of our redemption. Her life and vocation would be inextricably linked with that of her Son's. Everything would have to be given over to her relationship with Jesus, her Savior and her Child.

To be like Mary, to image her motherhood in our lives as Christians, it is necessary for us to do more than just say, "I accept Jesus." Our faith must be expressed in action and in virtue. Imagine a husband and wife. If one is constantly critical of the other and says no appreciative words to the other, yet claims deep down to really love one's spouse, where is the visible proof? It may be that one spouse makes sacrifices for the other and shows love in action, but it is still nice when love is expressed in word and action.

If we say we love Jesus, yet we make no effort to imitate Him in our lives, to practice the virtues that would truly make us living images of Christ, then where is the proof of that love? That the Spirit of God truly dwells in a soul is something that can only be known when Christ's love is manifested in a person's word and actions. As we come to the end of Advent and prepare for the celebration of Christmas, we would do well to ask our Blessed Mother to pray for us. Our prayer should be quite simple: to receive the grace we need to love her Son just as she did.



December 25, 2023  
Nativity of the Lord

## OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH

### Lord, God of Peace, Hear Our Prayer

Dear Parishioners,

"Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us, and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace; enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister. Make us sensitive to the plea of our citizens who entreat us to turn our weapons of war into implements of peace, our trepidation into confident trust, and our quarreling into forgiveness." Pope Francis. In a similar vein, we hear from spiritual writer, Richard Rohr: "There is no way to peace, peace is the way. There is no path toward love except by practicing love. War will always produce more war. Violence can never bring about true peace." Like the pope, Rohr is challenging us to live in peace and love, as difficult as that may be.

This Christmas more than ever, our deepest prayer is to the Prince of Peace, Christ Jesus. There is no doubt that the time is challenging. Our world is marked by wars, climate crises, and troubles of every nature. Indeed, no celebrations will be held in the land of our Saviour's birth this year because of war. In response, we turn with resolve to the source of all peace to experience within our own hearts God's peace, protection, and presence.

Let us be mindful that in the midst of all the strife, there have been remarkable celebrations and transitions during the past year. For one, we have celebrated 100 years of grace and favour at Our Lady's, and we have new leadership at both the school and parish. You, the parishioners, and school families have been exceptional in bringing together our parish and school as a seamless garment. I like to say that it is a small church with a mighty big heart. Or as the CBC personality, Stuart Maclean, host of Vinyl Café, used to say, "We might not be big, but we're small." With so many blessings, along with our daily trials and tribulations, we look forward with God's grace to the New Year that lies open before us - 2024. May that grace assist us in dealing with our anxieties and worries in a troubled time. For those who have lost loved ones, our condolences, for those who have welcomed new life, congratulations, and for those who continue to walk with us--deep gratitude. For those who struggle with faith and or the church, we want to be a listening ear, a sanctuary in a fragile world.

May we mark this holy season with genuine hospitality, gracious listening, and family time. Lord, help us to be gentle in our actions and speech as we stand together on the sacredness of these days.

Together with Frs. Alfredo and Fr. Mark, the Parish Pastoral Council, and the staff, we want to extend every blessing to you and your families throughout these holy days. May the Prince of Peace bring you peace of mind and heart. Through the intercession of St. Francis of Assisi, may all of us be instruments in the hands of God, to bring peace into the hearts and homes of others.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Fr Leo for all of us at Our Lady's.



*A Prayer  
As We Gather  
Around the  
Table*

Dear Heavenly  
Father,  
love brought Jesus  
to the earth,  
and love brings us to  
this Christmas table.  
Today as we share  
this holiday feast,  
may we also share  
with one another a  
joyful heart and a  
warm smile.  
May this Christmas  
gathering be filled  
with joy and kindness.  
And may the  
memories of today  
warm our hearts for  
years to come.  
Amen.

Full article on [catholicexchange.com](http://catholicexchange.com)

*Forever I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord. – Psalm 89*

*Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord. – Psalm 96*



## MASSES & SERVICES

Saturday Anticipated Mass: 5pm  
 Sunday Masses: 9am, 11am, 5pm  
 Mon – Fri Masses: 8am  
 Thurs OLPH Novena: After 8am Mass  
 Sat & Holidays: 9am Mass  
 Sat Adoration: 9:30am – 10am  
 Reconciliation:  
 Sat 4pm – 4:45pm  
 Or by appointment: 604-224-4344

## OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 9:30am-4pm

## CLERGY & STAFF

**Pastor**  
 Fr. Leo English, CSsR  
**Associate Pastor**  
 Fr. Alfredo Medina Ramos, CSsR  
**In-Residence**  
 Fr. Mark Miller, CSsR  
**Pastoral Coordinator**  
 Bertilla Watanabe, MAPS  
 Available Mon - Thurs  
**Reception**  
 Kathy Mok  
 Available Mon/Wed-Fri  
**Office Manager**  
 Virginia Fong  
 Available Tue - Thurs  
**Bookkeeper**  
 Corinna Siy  
 Contact email: csy.olph@rcav.org

## OLPH School Principal

Deirdre O'Callaghan  
**Jr. Kindergarten Director**  
 Maria Cortese

## CONTACT

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 Parish Office: 604-224-4344  
 OLPH School: 604-228-8811  
 Jr. Kindergarten: jrkindergarten@olphbc.ca



Use this QR code to visit our website, Instagram or Facebook page.  
 OLPH Church, 2465 Crown Street, Vancouver BC, V6R3V9

## NEWS & NOTICES

### 2024 Sunday Offering Donation Boxes For Pick-Up

Please pick up your 2024 Sunday Offering box in the church foyer before the Christmas break and **do not use it till January 2024**.

Note, 2023 envelopes cannot be used in 2024 because box numbers may change from year to year. Using envelopes from the past would result in your donation being credited to someone else.

### Christmas Office Hours & Bulletin

The parish office is closed for Christmas break from Monday Dec 25 and will reopen on Tuesday Jan 2. There will be no bulletin on Dec 31.

### Adult Confirmation Classes for Easter

If you're a Catholic over 18 but missed out on Confirmation or any other sacraments, please join us for 3 Wednesday evenings in January to prepare yourself to enter fully into the Church this Easter. Classes are Jan 17, 24 and 31 from 7pm – 8:30pm in the Madonna Room. There is a fee of \$30. [Please use this link to register.](#)

### Project Advance Update

Dear friends, we are drawing close to the end of this year's Project Advance appeal. Our pledges are currently at \$129,064, so close to our goal of \$130,000! To all who've given, thank you! For others, it's not too late! Please submit your donation by Friday Dec 29 to allow to make it to the 2023 tax year. You can also donate at [projectadvance.ca](http://projectadvance.ca)

### FLAT Snowshoe

An invitation to women aged 18-35: Come spend quality time with the Religious Sisters of the Archdiocese and have fun outdoors on Sat, Jan 6! Meet at St. Anthony's Parish in West Vancouver and start with Mass at 9 am., then drive to Cypress for snowshoeing up Black Mountain. The trail is a 5.3-km snowshoe loop with a beautiful view at the top. There is no cost. Please pack a bagged lunch and bring your snowshoes. If you need help getting snowshoes or finding a ride, please contact Sister Mary Martha at [smmhetzler@rcav.org](mailto:smmhetzler@rcav.org). Learn more and register at [beholdvancouver.org/events](http://beholdvancouver.org/events). Register by Wednesday, January 3.

### Spiritual Care Training Program

The Archdiocese of Vancouver is offering Spiritual Care Training to answer the call to reach out to seniors and the isolated. The eight-week course teaches how you can connect with them with genuine concern and be a presence in their lives. Topics covered include aging, communication, boundaries and self-care. Training is offered online via Zoom every Thursday, from February 1 to March 21, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Cost is \$30. Learn more and register at [beholdvancouver.org/events](http://beholdvancouver.org/events).



## PROJECT ADVANCE



## Archbishop Miller's 2023 Christmas Message

With particular concern this Christmas, we turn our gaze to the suffering Holy Land, to Bethlehem. There the Lord came into the world in a stable and was laid in a manger where animals feed on hay, since his parents could find no room in an inn.

Let us, then, look at the scene. Mary and Joseph do not seem to be a very fortunate family. Their Child was born in the midst of great hardship. Yet, they are full of profound joy, because they love each other and they are certain that God is at work in this astonishing birth.

And the shepherds? What did they have to rejoice about? That Newborn Infant wasn't going to change their condition of poverty and marginalization. It was their simple faith that helped them to recognize that the Child wrapped in swaddling clothes was the fulfilment of God's promised Saviour for all the people.

God came among us in silence and in the darkness of night. Why like this? Because the Word of God had no need of spotlights or loud human voices. He himself is the Word who gives life its meaning. He is the Light that brightens our path: "The true light, which enlightens everyone" (Jn 1:9). Christ's birth was the victory of the Light over the darkness of evil and sin.

At Christmas we celebrate that our mighty God truly became "Emmanuel," God-with-us. No barrier or any distance can separate us from him. God is so powerful that he made himself vulnerable and came to us as a defenseless child, so that we might love him. God is so good that he gave up the splendour of his divinity to be born in a stable, so that we might find him. In that Child Jesus, God became so close to us that we are able to speak to him personally and to enjoy a trusting relationship of deep affection with him.

To give a deeper meaning to Christmas, I urge every family to set up a Nativity scene in their home. It is a simple but effective way of passing on the beauty of the faith to your children. Let them experience amazement and wonder at Jesus' birth. The manger helps all of us to ponder in our hearts the mystery of God's love that was revealed in the poverty and simplicity of the Bethlehem stable.

Jesus comes to accompany our daily lives, to share with us in all things: our joys and sorrows, our hopes and fears. Like the shepherds on that silent night, let us set out in haste and allow ourselves to be amazed by the Child lying in a manger who is waiting to welcome us.

With my blessing, prayers and warmest best wishes for a joyous celebration of Christmas, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB

### PROJECT ADVANCE 2023

Archdiocesan Goal: \$49,800 | OLPH Parish Target: \$130,000

Proposed church upgrades for 2023

Repositioning of tabernacle with new furnishings | Reflooring |  
 New lectern | Cladding of existing pillars | Improved lighting on side aisles |  
 Seating for choir | Four stained-glass windows

## UPCOMING EVENTS

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Food Bank Donations                     | Every Weekend                          | Before and after Masses, Foyer                                     |
| Christmas Novena                        | 9 Days of Prayer<br>Dec 16 -24         | Follow on Instagram and Facebook                                   |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent Masses | Saturday<br>Dec 23<br>Sunday<br>Dec 24 | 5pm<br>(Anticipated Mass)<br>9am & 11am                            |
| Christmas Eve Masses                    | Sunday<br>Dec 24                       | 4pm<br>(Children's Mass)<br>11:45pm Caroling<br>12am Midnight Mass |
| Christmas Day Masses                    | Monday<br>Dec 25                       | 9am, 11am<br>& 4pm   |
| Christmas Week                          | Tues - Sat<br>Dec 26 - Dec 31          | 9am Morning Mass   |
| Feast of the Holy Family                | Saturday<br>Dec 30<br>Sunday<br>Dec 31 | 5pm<br>(Anticipated Mass)<br>9am, 11am<br>& 5pm                    |
| New Year's Day Masses                   | Monday<br>1 January                    | 9am & 4pm  |
| Regular Daily Masses                    | Tuesday onward<br>Jan 2                | 8am Mass as usual  |
| Catholic Adult Confirmation             | 3 Wednesdays<br>Jan 17, 24, 31         | 7pm - 8:30pm<br>Madonna Room                                       |
| Lenten Reflection Sr John M Sullivan    | Saturday<br>Jan 27                     | 10am - 12:30pm<br>Church   |

### Christmas Programs on Formed.org

OLPH Parishioners, for free access please use the parish zip code V6R3V9

